

## Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission

### Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2016, 9:00 AM – 12:20 PM

LARA Administrative Building, 2501 Woodlake Circle, Okemos, MI 48864

#### Attendance

**Present:** Lisa Gray, Roland Hwang, Soraya Kim, Jin-Kyu Koh, Grace Lee, Toshiki Masaki, Mahima Mahadevan, Kaushik Nag, Ryan Rosario and Jeffrey Vang

**By phone:** Asim Alavi, Nasim Ansari, Connie Dang, Anand Kumar, David Long, Joe Tasma and Tsu-Yin Wu

**Ex-officio and Guests:** Bing Goei, Director of MONA, Justine Foy, Commissions Liaison, and Muhith Musabbir, MAPAAC Fellow

**Staff:** Denise Yee Grim, Outreach Coordinator

**Unable to attend:** Jamie Hsu and Scott T. Ayotte

#### I. Call to Order

Vice-Chair Soraya Kim called the regular meeting of the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission to order at 9:01 AM on December 9, 2016. Soraya stated that based on the executive committee conference calls, the Governor has not accepted any applications for new commissioners. With that understanding, we will continue as normal and with the commissioners whose terms has ended this year and ask them to continue to serve on the commission and in their SIGs until further notice. Willie Dechavez is the only commissioner who is departing, because his term was extended for one year, 2016. We will recognize him for his contributions personally in January.

Soraya informed the commissioners that Nancy Short has moved on to another job in the private sector and she welcomed Justine Foy to MAPAAC as our new commissions' liaison.

#### II. Approval of September 10, 2016 Meeting Minutes:

Toshiki Masaki, MAPAAC's Secretary, submitted the draft September 10, 2016 meeting minutes for approval. Roland Hwang motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Jeffrey Vang seconded. Motion passed.

#### III. Review and Approval of the 2016 Annual Report Draft:

Each of the SIG group leaders reported on the highlights of the accomplishments in 2016 to the commission.

**SIG 1:** a. SIG 1's legislative engagement proposal to provide a framework to work collaborative and to engage APAs as approved by the commission. This document was presented at the MONA's joint legislative/advocacy committee as a model for legislative engagement. b. SIG 1's created the *Priorities for Action for the Michigan's APA Community* two-page document summarizing the top three concerns emerging from MAPAAC's town halls and community survey. This document is used to prioritize and focus the work of the commission.

**SIG 2:** a. SIG 2 created a reference guide toolkit, *Michigan Resources for APA Community and Families* (hard copy and electronic version), which features a list of public services available in the state of Michigan and other resources to address the ten top issues and concerns from our community town hall meetings. b. With the toolkits, SIG 2 conducted open house forums to respond to the issues and concerns resulting from the town hall meetings in Madison Heights and Grand Rapids. State of Michigan agencies' representatives attended the forums and presented their programs and services to address their concerns and issues.

**SIG 3:** a. Held anti-bullying panel and student/parents forums at the Chinese Community Center in Madison Heights in 2015, Martin Luther King Elementary School in Ann Arbor and at Kent County IDS in Grand Rapids in 2016. b. For the Korematsu dedications plans for 2017 include Canton High School on January 30, 2017 at 8:10 AM and Fordson High School in Dearborn on February 3, 2017 at

12:15 PM. The mayor of Dearborn will be attendance. Nasim Ansari stated that SIG 3 will also host an anti-bullying forum at the Western Michigan University (WMU) on February 4, 2017, 9 AM – 12 PM with lunch. Portage public schools will participate in the program. He is still working with WMU and the Kalamazoo public schools to coordinate the event.

**SIG 4:** a. SIG 4 coordinated the annual APA Heritage & Legislative Day in partnership with APIAVote-Michigan with cultural performance and speakers at the state capitol. Frank Wu was the keynote speakers at the networking lunch that followed the presentation at the capitol. b. On September 14<sup>th</sup>, we hosted a Leaders' Forum & Appreciation Dinner where APA community leaders, State department directors and legislators attended. A presentation of the 'State of APAs' by Jamie Hsu was delivered and five APA community organizations presented their missions and activities.

Denise Yee Grim reviewed the co-sponsorships and meetings with ethnic leadership groups and state agencies. Revisions: 1. moving the Fellowship information up as one of our highlight; 2. adding the sponsorship of the Philippines Community Health Fair and minor changes for SIG 3 report.

Toshiki Masaki approved the annual report and Roland Hwang seconded pending on the revisions to the annual report. Motion passed.

A copy of the toolkit will be enclosed to the annual report.

#### **IV. 2017 Executive Committee Slate:**

Connie Dang presented the slate of candidates for the executive committee. Jamie is approved by the Governor and serves at his pleasure. Roland motion to approve the slate of candidates and Lisa Gray seconded. Motion approved.

#### **V. MAPAAC 2017 Joint Meeting with APA Community Leaders:**

Denise spoke on behalf of Jamie Hsu draft proposal: *Cultural Understanding – a dialogue with APA community leaders and call for action*. Jamie would like the commissioners' comments and to ask for volunteer to be on the planning committee. She outlined the concept to invite APA community leaders to join MAPAAC in their initiatives and address the current cultural conflicts that exist currently. The invitation for this event will be the following: MAPAAC's strategic partners, APA centers, and large APA organizations, MONA, LARA and MDCR to participate in this dialogue. Soraya commented that the bullying and anti-immigration concerns has increased after the election. By coordinating a committee to look at these issues and to come up with responses and see if we can work through the SIGs to address these issues. This is a special committee that MAPAAC can lead.

Comments from the Commissioners:

What is the outcome of this meeting? How is this different from the joint legislative/advocacy committee work and other ethnic commissions are doing?

The difference of this committee from the joint legislative committee is the MAPAAC will focus on coordinating and collaborating with the different Asian ethnic groups to have their inputs. If the information we gather from the committee that the joint committee should address, then we can bring in the other ethnic commissions to be supportive of the agenda.

What is unique about the APA community is the huge gaps between the complaints that Asian Americans are being bullied and the report rate to the MDCR. We may seek MDCR to inform that this is a problem of APAs not report bullying.

Another way of looking at this concept is to have conversations other than bullying and anti-immigration and ask if their other similar concerns that our communities are concern about. With that information, we can evaluate the information and determine what we need to do and see if they fit in our existing SIGs or redesign the SIGs' initiatives.

It is unclear what this committee is trying to do and it seems like there is a lot of duplication. What are the expectations of the planning committee? What is the outcome?

The concept is good. This is an extension of our town halls and survey in a way to keep in touch on what's going on and it's an important role for MAPAAC. MAPAAC should be a leader and we are able to bring people together and have the resources to do it. We need to be more flexible in receiving information and we don't have that outlet right now. We need to respond to the times. Sooner the better, people are uncertain of what is going to happen in January. Important to get people together now.

Soraya summarized the discussion that the Executive Committee and SIG leaders will have a conversation with Jamie first. We can ask Jamie to document his vision or decide to have volunteers to have this conversation collectively. We need a clear understanding of this concept.

It was suggested to submit concerns to Jamie directly prior to the planning committee meeting. Kaushik volunteered to be on the planning committee.

#### **VI. Budget Update:**

Ryan Rosario, Trustee, reviewed the 2016 budget and the 2017 budget allocations. Denise will send the breakdown of expenses the community outreach and sponsorship and the sponsorship request forms to the commissioners. The executive committee will expand the criteria details for the sponsorships. Denise explained that MAPAAC emphasized the partnership/collaboration in sponsorships. Ryan agreed to provide a pie chart of expenditures in the budget reporting.

#### **VII. SIG's Initiatives Report and Recommendations:**

**SIG 1:** Mahima, SIG 1 leader, commented on the legislative engagement rubric of four different points and how MAPAAC can respond to legislative concerns. One piece of the rubric is to work with the joint legislative/advocacy committee. Their role is to address any issues that are brought up in the subcommittee, ethnic commissions and/or MONA. Each issue is examined and ideas are determined on how to respond. Any ideas from this subcommittee will be presented to the commissions for directions or approval. The subcommittee is developing its framework and she provided a copy of the purpose and principles of the joint legislative/advocacy subcommittee document. She mentioned the press release of the statements from the ethnic commissions responded to the hostility towards immigrants and other diverse community. She explained the steps how the committee was proactive in responding to the current issues of discrimination of Muslim Americans and Mexican Americans. Toshiki mentioned that the subcommittee focus is to engage with policy makers and legislators. Bing commented that the document is presented to the commissions to provide an understanding of how the subcommittee is going to work and the parameters that they will be using to guide them on items they will address. Any support for the commission is beneficial to the subcommittee and if the commission would like to add to the guidelines, please submit them to him. Soraya commented that this document is a sharing document and if need be, we can revisit it for approval.

**SIG 2:** Tsu-Yin Wu reviewed on the summary of the initiatives worksheet which listed the three initiative topics for 2017. They are continuing the open education forums from 2016 where they are providing information back to the community with the state of Michigan agency representatives. The forums serve two purposes: sending information back to the community to

empower them with information and receiving new information of their concerns and issues. In the most recent forum in the Bangladesh community, we heard the case of residents receiving obstacles in working with the local DHHS offices. MAPAAC will follow up with BAPAC regarding this issue. We will host the forums in the underserved communities like the Vietnamese and Hmong communities that would might need these services.

Second initiative to provide information to the international student groups to help them to be more competitive and to navigate the American system and educate them on cultural and social etiquette. Soraya commented that we should consider leveraging existing resources that the state offer. There is a talent retention program, Global Talent Retention Initiative of Michigan, which has many of the resources that we can share verse recreating a program for international students. Grace added that this initiative would also benefit the Asian population, critical to Asian restaurants.

The third initiative is to provide resources for community centers to learn about fundraising and to apply for small businesses loans. MAPAAC will work with APACC on this initiative.

Soraya commented that each commissioners are busy with their own SIGs and they are pulled in many different directions. If they have interests and time of the other SIGs, please support and participate in their initiatives.

Bing advocated for the underserved West Michigan region and there is a lack of services for the community in West Michigan. He urged the commission to think about the West Michigan region since they are not receiving any resources. Ryan and Tsu-Yin asked the West Michigan commissioners to share information of concerns, help identify underserved sub communities and give ideas to SIG 2, so they may consider hosting an open house forum or town hall in their region.

**SIG 3:** Roland Hwang, leader of SIG 3, referred to his report earlier on the changes to the future goals of SIG 3. He complimented the partners they are working with in coordination of the Korematsu events. Denise will email the flyers of the two event to the commissioners. SIG 3 is also working on Korematsu event with the Asian Pacific American Law Student Association at University of Michigan.

**SIG 4:** Joe Tasma, leader of SIG 4, asked Denise to speak of the two events for 2017. The first event planned is the APA Heritage & Legislative Day at the State Capitol in Lansing in partnership APIAVote-Michigan on May 10, 2017, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM and networking luncheon at the Mackinac Room in the House of Representative building from 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM.

Soraya continued by saying that they had a good meeting with Aamina from APIAVote-Michigan. The first thought is to bring energy of young adults to the program. A decision was made to invite Miss Michigan to be our keynote speaker. Jin-Koh commented that we would like to de-emphasize the cultural presentation of the program, because it is a challenge to schedule professionals to perform during the week. Jeff Vang commented that in the past celebration, the program was in the early morning where high school Asian students were invited to attend the heritage celebration. Due to the new time change, students are now unable to attend; maybe that's why we are not seeing young students attending the celebration. Maybe in the future, we should consider changing back to early morning to attract students. Soraya stated that APIAVote-Michigan is meeting with legislators in the morning and the program is schedule late in the morning. Roland commented that it's an opportunity for the APA community to showcase cultural preservations, if there is an opportunity for a group or a person to step up, we should not deny them the opportunity, not to mention and there are a lots school busses that tour the rotunda and if we can marry this program with different schools districts that tour the state capitol, we should invite them. Soraya commented that SIG 4 will take this information for consideration.

The second event is the MAPAAC Leaders' Forum and Appreciation Dinner tentative scheduled for Thursday, September 13, 2017 in the Novi area. There was a discussion of moving the date due to the joint ethnic commission reception on the September 14<sup>th</sup>. The commissioners who are traveling like the idea to attend the dinner on the 13<sup>th</sup> spend the night and attend the second event on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Soraya stated that SIG 4 will consider this suggestion and determine the date for the dinner.

#### **VIII. Administrative Update:**

Denise spoke on the calendar of events spreadsheet and added the CAPA Splendor of the East date of May 13<sup>th</sup>. There was a correction of the Korematsu Recognition in Canton –February 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the ACA Lunar New Year Celebration is on Feb 8<sup>th</sup> at Golden Harvest restaurant on the calendar too. She did a tutorial on filling out the new travel expense voucher and Justine Foy explained the reimbursement rules. The mileage allowance for overnight hotel stay is 50 miles one way. There is a 24 hours cancellation policy for all hotel reservations. Denise will email the electronic version of the expense voucher.

#### **VIII. Determine 2017 Commission Meeting Dates:**

Soraya proposed the 2017 commission meeting dates for consideration. Justine Foy commented that the September 14<sup>th</sup> commission meeting will be in the afternoon at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Lansing. There will be three parts of meetings. The first one will be the joint legislative/advocacy committee meeting followed by the three individual ethnic commission meeting and ending with the reception at the Governor's Lansing residence in the evening. The Governor has been invited to the reception. At the reception, the chairs of each commission are invited to give an update of their commission's vision and goal for the year.

The commission decided to continue a have one Saturday meeting a year. It was decided that the executive committee will review all suggestions and determine the location for the March meeting.

#### **IX. New Business:**

Muhith Musabbir, MAPAAC Fellow, presented his independent project report, *Health Disparities in the APA Community*. The commissioners commented it was a very informative summary. He will email the complete summary along with the references to Denise and she will email to the commissioners and Bing Goei. Soraya thanked Muhith for his work with MAPAAC and presented him with a MAPACC lapel pin as a token of appreciation.

Bing Goei shared the MONA's Adult ESL Grand Award event held on December 5<sup>th</sup> where they awarded five primary organizations representing a collaboration of multiple partners. The winners were: ACCESS, International Institute of Metro Detroit, Literacy Center of West Michigan, Michigan United and the Refugee Development Center in Lansing.

The legislative fraction passed a resolution, ACR28, as the federal government to stop all refugee placements. This happened fast in the lame duck session that MONA had no chance to respond to. He submitted a response on behalf of MONA to the state legislators on why this resolution is wrong and the unintended consequences of passing such legislation, which Michigan will be viewed as an unwelcoming state and will lose track of international talent that may consider Michigan as part of new business development and/or career development. He feels that the joint legislative/advocacy committee will have a lot of work in the future and to try to find a way to educate and inform our leadership of the unintended consequences of bad legislation and bad resolutions.

The Middle Eastern affairs commission town hall meeting in Kalamazoo was stand room crowd of community individuals. Bing made a comment that they need to mobilize their community to

address the issues of refugee resettlement. We need to look at collaboration to begin protecting our ethnic/immigrant/refugee community.

On May 9<sup>th</sup>, the WMAAA is having their gala in Grand Rapids. He encouraged the commission to figure out a way to feel empowered to make significant impact in West Michigan. He is challenging the West Michigan commissioners to be mindful of what is going on in West Michigan.

**X. No Public Comments:**

**XI. Announcements:**

- Jeff announced a Hmong New Year Celebration next week in Macomb County and will forward it to Denise for distribution.
- Lisa announced a Chinese New Year Celebration (CAGD) on February 11<sup>th</sup> at the Ford Performance Center in Dearborn. Lisa will email the information to Denise for distribution.
- Mahima announced that she started a new job with the New American Leaders Project out of New York and was hired as the Michigan field coordinator. The non-profit and non-partisan organization focuses on first and second generation immigrants to run for state and local offices. Mahima will forward the information about the organization to Denise for distribution.
- Connie announced an Asian New Year Celebration on January 21<sup>st</sup> in West Michigan. Jamie will be receiving an invitation.

**XII. Adjournment:**

Roland Hwang motioned to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Mahima Mahadevan.  
Motion passed.

The meeting concluded at 12:18 PM

Minutes prepared by: Denise Yee Grim, December 27, 2016

Minutes submitted by

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Toshiki Masaki, Secretary